

## § 21.52

(3) *Retaining employment.* The physical or psychological effects of a service-connected condition adversely affect the veteran's ability to maintain employment which requires reasonably developed skills. This criterion is not met if a veteran though lacking reasonably developed skills, has a history of continuing, stable employment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3101(1))

(f) *Determination of employment handicap.* The counseling psychologist may find the veteran has an employment handicap.

(1) An employment handicap which entitles the veteran to assistance under this program exists when all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The veteran has an impairment of employability; this includes veterans who are qualified for suitable employment, but do not obtain or retain such employment for reasons not within their control;

(ii) The veteran's service-connected disability materially contributes to the impairment of employability;

(iii) The veteran has not overcome the effects of the impairment of employability through employment in an occupation consistent with his or her pattern of abilities, aptitudes and interests.

(2) An employment handicap does not exist when *any* of the following conditions is present:

(i) The veteran's employability is not impaired; this includes veterans who are qualified for suitable employment, but do not obtain or retain such employment for reasons within their control;

(ii) The veteran's employability is impaired, but his or her service-connected disability does not materially contribute to the impairment of employability.

(iii) The veteran has overcome the effects of the impairment of employability through employment in an occupation consistent with his or her pattern of abilities, aptitudes and interests, and is successfully maintaining such employment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3102)

(g) *Eligibility for employment assistance.* If a veteran is not found to have

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an employment handicap a separate determination of his or her eligibility for employment assistance will be made under provisions of § 21.47.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3117)

(h) *Responsibility for determinations.* The determination of an employment handicap and eligibility for employment assistance may only be made by a counseling psychologist in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(a))

[49 FR 40814, Oct. 18, 1984; 50 FR 9622, Mar. 11, 1985, as amended at 54 FR 21216, May 17, 1989]

### § 21.52 Serious employment handicap.

(a) *Requirement of determination of serious employment handicap.* A separate determination whether a serious employment handicap exists shall be made in each case in which an employment handicap is found.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(a))

(b) *Definition.* The term *serious employment handicap* means a significant impairment of a veteran's ability to prepare for, obtain or retain employment consistent with such veteran's abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3101(7))

(c) *Serious employment handicap exists.* A veteran who has been found to have an employment handicap shall also be held to have serious employment handicap if he or she has:

(1) A neuropsychiatric service-connected disability rated at thirty percent or more disabling; or

(2) Any other service-connected disability rated at fifty percent or more disabling.

(d) *Serious employment handicap may exist.* A veteran with a nonneuropsychiatric service-connected disability may be found to have a serious employment handicap even though the disability is rated at thirty or forty percent disabling, when either of the following conditions exists:

(1) The veteran has a prior history of poor adjustment in training and employment, and special efforts will be

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needed if the veteran is to be rehabilitated; or

(2) The veteran's situation presents special problems due to nonservice-connected disability, family pressures, etc., and a number of special and supportive services are needed to effect rehabilitation.

(e) *Serious employment handicap normally not found.* A finding of serious employment handicap will normally not be made when a veteran's service-connected disability is rated at less than thirty percent disabling. A finding of serious employment handicap may nevertheless be made when:

(1) The veteran's service-connected disability has caused substantial periods of unemployment or unstable work history;

(2) The veteran has demonstrated a pattern of maladaptive behavior which is shown by a history of withdrawal from society or continuing dependency on government income support programs; and

(f) *Responsibility for determining serious employment handicap.* A counseling psychologist in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division shall make determinations of serious employment handicap.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(a))

[49 FR 40814, Oct. 18, 1984, as amended at 54 FR 37332, Sept. 8, 1989]

### § 21.53 Reasonable feasibility of achieving a vocational goal.

(a) *Requirement.* The Department of Veterans Affairs shall determine the reasonable feasibility of achieving a vocational goal in each case in which a veteran has either:

- (1) An employment handicap, or
- (2) A serious employment handicap.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(a))

(b) *Definition.* The term *vocational goal* means a gainful employment status consistent with the veteran's abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3101(8))

(c) *Expeditious determination.* The determination of reasonable feasibility shall be made as expeditiously as possible when necessary information has

been developed in the course of initial evaluation. If an extended evaluation is necessary as provided in § 21.57 a decision of feasibility shall be made by the end of the extended evaluation. Any reasonable doubt shall be resolved in favor of a finding of feasibility.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3105(d))

(d) *Vocational goal is reasonably feasible.* Achievement of a vocational goal is reasonably feasible for a veteran with either an employment or serious employment handicap when the following conditions are met:

(1) Vocational goal(s) has (have) been identified;

(2) The veteran's physical and mental conditions permit training for the goal(s) to begin within a reasonable period; and

(3) The veteran:

(i) Possesses the necessary educational skills and background to pursue the vocational goal; or

(ii) Will be provided services by the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop such necessary educational skills as part of the program.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3104(a)(1), 3106(a))

(e) *Criteria for reasonable feasibility not met.* (1) When VA finds that the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section are not met, but VA has not determined that achievement of a vocational goal is not currently reasonably feasible, VA shall provide the rehabilitation services contained in § 21.35(i)(1)(i) of this part as appropriate;

(2) A finding that achievement of a vocational goal is infeasible without a period of extended evaluation requires compelling evidence which establishes infeasibility beyond any reasonable doubt.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3104(a)(1), 3106(b))

(f) *Independent living services.* The counseling psychologist shall determine the current reasonable feasibility of a program of independent living services in each case in which a vocational rehabilitation program is not found reasonably feasible. The concurrence of the Vocational Rehabilitation